

Montreal

Thousands march in Montreal against mandatory vaccines for health workers, vaccination passport

MNAs held 2-day debate on compulsory vaccines for workers in the public sector

[Sabrina Jonas](#) · CBC News · Posted: Aug 28, 2021 6:43 PM ET | Last Updated: August 28, 2021



Demonstrators gathered in Maisonneuve Park and marched in protest of Quebec's public health measures, including the upcoming vaccination passport and mandatory vaccines for health-care workers. (Jean-Claude Taliana/CBC)



Thousands of people marched in Montreal Saturday in protest of Quebec's public health measures, including the upcoming vaccination passport and mandatory vaccines for health-care workers.

Protestors gathered at Maisonneuve Park around 1 p.m. and marched along Sherbrooke Street to end in front of the Quebec Order of Nurses (OIIQ) building on Molson Street. Signs reading, "Choice, not mandate" and "No to mandatory vaccinations," in French could be seen among the crowd.

"I'm definitely not for the vaccination passport," said Dave Marciale, an attendee at the protest. "I find it goes a bit too far. What's next? We don't know."

Maude Gauthier, who attended the protest with Marciale, added: "If we accept [the vaccination passport], we're going to say yes to everything."



Protesters held up signs denouncing Quebec's proposed plan to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for health-care workers. (Jean-Claude Taliana/CBC)

Organizers behind Saturday's protest, the Canadian Frontline Nurses and Réinfo Covid Québec, say this latest demonstration, called "Professionals United", is significant.

According to the groups, professionals from health-care, education and policing sectors took part in it and spoke out, despite the repercussions they may face at work.

Premier François Legault [announced last week](#) his intention to make vaccination compulsory for all health-care staff who come into close contact with the public for at least 15 minutes while working.

- [Quebec mandates vaccinations for all health-care workers, masks in post-secondary schools](#)

Christine Galavotti, a nurse at a hospital in Montreal's west end, says she is steadfastly opposed to this plan.

"When I was young, I had severe reaction [to a vaccine] and I was told by doctors not to get vaccinated," she told CBC News. "So on that front, I can't take that type of risk."

Galavotti says the government should not be able to impose something regarding people's personal decisions about their health.





Legault said last week that a worrisome trend in the number of new COVID-19 cases pushed the province to invoke further vaccination and masking measures to fight the fourth wave fuelled by the highly-transmissible delta variant. (Jean-Claude Taliana/CBC)

Fatima Tokhmafshan, a geneticist and bioethicist in Montreal, says while some exceptions for people who are medically incapable of being vaccinated will have to be recognized, health-care providers have a fiduciary responsibility to not cause harm to patients. She says being vaccinated is an example of said duty.

"It needs to be very underlined and clarified that the decision to get a vaccine or not is not really a personal one," she said. "You cannot say 'my right, my freedom', when your decision and the steps that you're making are actually going to impact the people who are coming in contact with you."

“The decision to get a vaccine or not is not really a personal one”

- Fatima Tokhmafshan, geneticist and bioethicist

Tokhmafshan says for a health-care professional, that responsibility is even greater because they work in a profession where the primary objective is to care for other people.

Legault said last week that a worrisome trend in the number of new COVID-19 cases pushed the province to invoke further vaccination and masking measures to fight the fourth wave fuelled by the highly-transmissible delta variant.

Saturday's demonstration comes on the heels of a two-day special consultation at Quebec's National Assembly where MNAs debated the provincial government's plan to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for health-care workers, as well as other public-sector employees, including teachers.

A recommendation from public health on mandatory vaccinations for these workers should be finalized next week, Health Minister Christian Dubé said on [Twitter](#) Friday.

- [Quebec could make changes to vaccination passport after flaws in system exposed](#)

- [Answers to questions big and small about Quebec's new vaccine passport](#)

Meanwhile, in four days, Quebecers will need to show proof they are adequately vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to access certain places, such as restaurants, gyms and casinos, as well as a host of other non-essential activities, such as paint ball, movie theatres and zoos.

The mobile app for the vaccination passport became available for download on Aug. 25.



Vaccine passports represent freedom for majority of Quebecers, Dubé says

12 months ago | 1:52

Health Minister Christian Dubé says the new system, starting Sept. 1, will mean most people won't lose access to non-essential services during the fourth wave.

"The vaccine passport is a balance we have found in keeping our economy open while protecting the population," said Dubé at a news conference this week.

"With the vaccine and the passport, we want to avoid closing businesses and banning activities."

A full list of places and events requiring the vaccination passport come Sept. 1 is [available here](#), in French.

Based on reporting by Valeria Cori-Manocchio

[CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices](#) | [About CBC News](#)

[Corrections and clarifications](#) | [Submit a news tip](#) | [Report error](#) ▼

©2022 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved.

Visitez Radio-Canada.ca